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RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 5559
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0735
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 3568
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4918
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0860
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA PRIORITY 3042
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1476
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2356
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000164

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: MECHANISMS OF GOVERNMENT MOVING FORWARD

REF: A. KATHMANDU 157

[1](#)B. KATHMANDU 160

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Speaker and Deputy Speaker Elected

[1](#)1. (C) At its second sitting on January 17, the Interim Parliament elected Subash Nemwang as Speaker. Nemwang was the Speaker of the previous House of Representatives as well. The election came after a day of negotiations between the governing Seven-Party Alliance (SPA) and the Maoists. Manohar Bhattarai, Special Secretary of the Parliamentary Secretariat, told Emboff January 17 that the SPA and Maoists

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had struck a deal whereby Nemwang could retain the Speaker position as long as the Maoists could have the position of Deputy Prime Minister in the Interim Government. Bhattarai suspected that Krishna Bahadur Mahara, the leader of the Maoist Parliamentary Delegation, would get the position of Deputy PM. However, Indian Ambassador to Nepal Shiv Shankar Mukherjee told the Ambassador on January 18 that he had heard that Baburam Bhattarai, Maoist third-in-command, would get the post of Deputy PM (Ref A).

Prime Minister Swears-in Chief Justice

[1](#)2. (U) On January 18, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala administered the oath of office and secrecy to Dilip Kumar Poudel, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. This was the first time that a Prime Minister had sworn in a Chief Justice; previously this had been done by the King. There was a small amount of controversy after the swearing-in because the PM had not taken the oath of office himself as PM before swearing-in the Chief Justice. The controversy died down as quickly as it was raised, since the PM had taken the oath as a Member of Parliament on the opening of the Interim Parliament and thus considered himself officially "sworn-in" as PM.

Political Leaders Worried

¶3. (C) Jhalanath Khanal, Member of the Interim Parliament for the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), told Emboff that the Maoists will get the position of Deputy PM in the Interim Government because it was necessary for the SPA to "bring them into confidence." Khanal said that PM Koirala had "not taken a firm stand against the Maoists" and blamed the PM for the concession. (Note: According to another Embassy source (Ref B), however, it was internal dissension within the CPN-UML that opened the way for the Maoists.) Arjun Narsingh KC, Central Committee Member of the Nepali Congress Party (NC), said that it was unfortunate that the Maoists would get the Deputy PM position because it would give them even more power in the Interim Government. Both Khanal and KC worried that, given the PM's poor health, a Maoist as Deputy PM would become PM if something happened to PM Koirala. Khanal opined that this would be "very dangerous."

Comment

¶4. (C) The mechanisms of government under the new Interim Constitution are moving forward in Nepal, and the Maoists are coming closer to entering the Interim Government. While it is not official that the Maoists will get a Deputy PM position in the Interim Government, most interlocutors agree that they will. The immediate challenge is for the Seven-Party Alliance to ensure in that case that someone from their ranks becomes the senior Deputy PM, and thus Prime Minister Koirala's successor per the constitution. With the Prime Minister having received nearly despotic powers under the Interim Constitution, the urgency of resolving this issue so that a Maoist does not inherit those same powers can hardly be overemphasized.

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